

THE ANGEL OF PEACE

" Have mercy upon so many souls and bodies that are perishing. O pastor and keeper of the cellar of the blood of the Lamb, let not trouble nor shame nor the abuse that you might think to receive, nor servile fear draw you back, nor the perverse counsellors of the devil who counsel you to nought else save wars and misery. Consider what great evils are resulting from this wicked war, and how great is the good that will be the result of peace. Alas I babbo mio, my soul is full of woe, for my iniquities are the cause of every ill. It seems that the devil has taken the lordship of the world, not by himself, for he can do nothing ; but in as much as we have given him. On whatever side I turn, I see that each one has given him the keys of free will by his perverse desires ; laymen, religious, and clergy are proudly pursuing delights and states and worldly riches, with much impurity and misery. But, above all other things that I see, the most abominable in the sight of God are the flowers that are planted in the mystical body of Holy Church—which should be flowers of sweet odour, and their life a mirror of virtue, hungry lovers of the honour of God and of the salvation of souls. They are befouled with every misery, lovers of themselves, uniting their own sins with those of the others, and especially in the persecution that is being dealt to the sweet Spouse of Christ and to your Holiness.¹ Alas ! we have fallen under the sentence of death, and we have made war upon God. O babbo mio, you are given us as the mediator to make this peace ; and I do not see how it can be done, unless you carry the cross of holy desire. We are at war with God, and your rebellious children are at war with God and with your Holiness. God wills and demands of you that, according to your power, you should take the lordship from the hands of the demons. Set yourself to freeing Holy Church from the foul smell of her ministers ; weed out these stinking flowers, and plant sweet-smelling flowers therein, virtuous men who fear God. Then I pray your Holiness to be pleased to grant peace and to accept it, in whatever way it can be had, always without injury to the Church

¹ That is, the wickedness of the priests and ecclesiastics is giving strength to the opponents of the Holy See.